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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4787
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 3674
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 5685
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9892
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 001310

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2018

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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTION MONITORS FEWER THAN EXPECTED

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Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Raymond L. Brown. Reason
s 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. South Africa has increased its election monitoring team by only ten members, bringing the total to 70 observers. An advance team of 20 observers left on 9 June, while the remaining 50 are meant to depart on 20 June. However, SAG's DFA is considering a proposal by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) to tack on an additional 40 monitors from civil society, provided they pay their own costs. Members of IDASA are seeking Embassy funding, and have complained about the lack of interest by DFA officials. END SUMMARY.

SAG BARELY EXPANDS ELECTION MONITORING TEAM

12. (C) PolOff spoke to DFA's Zimbabwe desk officer Eden Reid on 13 June to verify the number of South African election monitors for the upcoming 27 June run-off in Zimbabwe. Reid said that the official delegation will number 70 and be "multi-sectoral," meaning Parliamentarians, government officials, and members of civil society organizations are included. An advance team of 20 observers left on 9 June and the remaining 50 will depart on 20 June.

13. (C) This number, however, does not track with statements from DFA's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, who is leading SAG's election monitoring team. On 28 May, Mamabolo told diplomats at a South Africa Liaison Office event on Zimbabwe that every SADC country was encouraged to double its number of election monitors to Zimbabwe, adding that South Africa would double its team from 60 to 120 members. When PolOff told Reid she was under impression that the SAG's delegation would be larger, he said, "South Africa can't be expected to do everything!" He then said that other SADC countries "needed to pull their weight," but in the same breath added that there is no capacity in the region to do so. "We'll be lucky if Swaziland or Malawi sends two people," he complained.

CIVIL SOCIETY OFFERS ADDITIONAL OBSERVERS

14. (C) However, Reid also stated that Mamabolo is considering the Institute for Democracy in South Africa's (IDASA) offer to add 40 additional observers from civil society. Of the 40 additional members, 30 will come from the South African

Litigation Center, which is affiliated with Open Society and famous for lodging the legal complaint that stopped the Chinese vessel from off-loading arms destined for Zimbabwe, and 10 from the South African NGO Coalition. If approved, they will be officially considered part of SAG's observation team and be accredited by SADC. However, SAG is not willing to finance any of these new members. IDASA Director Ivor Jenkins called PolOff on 11 June to solicit Embassy funds for the additional observers, adding that they really had to press DFA to even consider their proposal. Jenkins said he got the impression that funding was only part of the issue, and that Reid, who is a junior desk officer, was also pushing back because he did not want "extra work." Indeed, Reid made it perfectly clear he is unhappy at even the prospect of the team being expanded, because "all of the work will fall on me," he complained.

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SAFETY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ON PEOPLE'S MINDS

15. (C) Chris Gevers, IDASA's Project Coordinator told PolOff on 10 June that he suspects the SAG will have trouble getting many of its original 60 monitors to return for the run-off. First, he said that many fear for their safety given the deteriorating security situation. Second, he added that many do not want to have to toe the SAG/SADC line. (NOTE: Reid spent several minutes emphasizing to PolOff that everyone on the SAG team will have to "abide by the code of conduct," and that the SAG must present a "united front." END NOTE) Last, he said he suspects DFA did not put in the effort to expand the team because Mamabolo has been out of the country so much negotiating the Burundi conflict, but also because the SAG expected both MDC and ZANU-PF to enter into a GNU before the

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run-off.

16. (C) IDASA also will be sending an additional 20 people from "IDASA and partners," who will not be accredited. However, most of the original IDASA team members will not return, he said, because they entered Zimbabwe on tourist visas and have serious security concerns. Those who do return will likely be Zimbabwean expats, he added.

COMMENT

17. (C) Notwithstanding Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad's comments today that free and fair elections in Zimbabwe are still possible, South Africa's role in the run-off is off to a rocky start. The number of election monitors is well below expectations, and the fact that civil society is trying to make up SAG's shortfall at its own expense suggests a lack of political will. Whether SAG accepts the additional team members is uncertain. Mamabolo appears to genuinely care about Zimbabwe and would probably prefer an expanded team. However, accepting additional monitors from civil society runs the risk that SAG will not present a "united front," something Mamabolo strongly believes in.
BOST